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ABSTRACT

This is the report of a "human relations" lab which was held on a rural estate where the staff and participants lived for eight days. Both six months after and five weeks before participation in this intensive T-group experience, the participants were described by themselves, one intimate, and one colleague on a variety of personality measures which reduced--as anticipated from theory-- to independent measures of Self-Acceptance (SA) and Other-Acceptance (OA). Covariance analysis of perceived changes (postlab score minus prelab score) revealed significant gains on both dimensions as well as significant variations in Self-Acceptance gains by T-groups. Within-lab ratings of trainers by T-group members on effectiveness, Self-Disclosure, and Feedback-Seeking generally correlated positively and significantly with changes in both Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance by T-group units. Senior trainers who were Diplomats in clinical psychology were notably most effective. The need for a greater emphasis upon the acceptance of others was indicated by the much smaller overall gain in OA than in SA. (Author/BW)

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Differential T-Group Gains in Acceptance-Rejection of the Self Versus Others

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In a review article, Campbell and Dunnette (1968) noted the paucity of research evidence regarding the differential effects of trainers on T-groups. In a current study, Bolman (1971) identified only two prior published investigations of this topic and only Yalom and Lieberman's (1971) study of encounter group casualties concerns aftereffects. As Carl Rogers (1969) characterized the verbal encounter or T-group as probably "the most important social invention of this century" and depicted the public demand for such experiences "as utterly beyond belief," the need for fuller research exploration of the impact of T-groups seems manifest.

Studies which appraise the effects of T-groups along prepotent dimensions are obviously of greater potential value than studies which embrace less important variables. Because diverse evidence indicates that the bipolar dimensions of acceptance versus rejection of the

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self and others best encompass interpersonal behavior, these were explored in this study. It is principally empirical data, rather than theoretical speculations, which has thrust these two variables into prominence. Although then labeled Autonomy-Control and Love-Hostility, Schaefer (1959) found that these dimensions accounted for many of the relationships among narrower measures of maternal-child interaction. Foa (1961) reached a similar conclusion from convergences in a broad variety of research concerning behavior in groups. Adams (1964) observed that since the time of Hippocrates these two polarities have repeatedly been used as a comprehensive basis for classifying human behavior. Also, that the axis of Dominance-Submissiveness defined "the degree of acceptance or rejection of the self while the (orthogonal) Affection-Hostility axis defines the degree of acceptance or rejection of the other." Harris's (1969) popular book, I'm OK--You're OK, is also a direct tribute to these same dimensions.

While the reports of the first-hand participants in any type of experience have an undeniable relevance, the self-reported changes of members of T-groups or psychotherapy groups are commonly suspected of having a self-serving bias. Consequently, this study included data about how the associates of T-group participants appraised changes in addition to similar data from the participants.

Another goal was to ascertain if the T-group trainers differentially effected the postlab behaviors of their T-group members. In addition to assessing the perceived effectiveness of the trainers,

the variable of self-disclosure was investigated in view of Culbert's (1968) finding that trainer self-disclosure influenced the gains of T-group members. The prominence of the "feedback" phenomena in descriptions of T-groups also led to the inclusion of a related measure in the research design.

Method

Setting

This "human relations" lab was held on a rural estate where the staff and participants lived for eight-days. The emphasis was upon growth, rather than upon psychotherapy, although there is probably much overlap between these two concepts from a communication viewpoint. The primary goal of this lab was enhancement of the participant's awareness of strengths and limitations in interpersonal communication skills. Lecturettes, skill practice sessions, and special subgroup meetings were interspersed with T-groups. Nonverbal activities occurred primarily within T-groups and were not highly emphasized. Verbal interactions were given a distinctly higher priority. Special efforts were made to help the participants relate "new learnings" acquired during this lab to their "back home" environment. The setting facilitated extensive informal activities, including swimming, volleyball, extra hours discussions, etc., among both the staff and participants.

Group Composition

There were five T-groups of ten participants and two trainers each. In all T-group sessions the trainers worked in pairs consisting

of a more seasoned senior trainer and a less experienced junior co-trainer. All senior trainers were Ph.D.s, three in clinical psychology and one each in counseling and social psychology. Four senior and one junior staff members had completed eight-week summer internships, sponsored by the National Training Laboratories (NTL), in Bethel, Maine. Both staff levels included four males and one female. Trainer pairings maximized differences in backgrounds and across sexes.

All participants were recruited through the State of Michigan Training Laboratories, Inc. (SMTL), a university-linked network of behavioral science professionals which had sponsored similar labs semi-annually in Michigan for several years. The lab fee was \$200. plus \$65. for room and board. The 50 participants included 13 junior or senior high school teachers, 11 graduate students--principally in social work or psychology--, 5 school principals, 5 pastors or priests, 4 school counselors, 2 each of housewives, professors, social case workers, and school system superintendents. Also, one school curriculum consultant, one psychiatrist, one director of marketing, and one school art coordinator. This group consisted of 33 males and 17 females. The participants were assigned to T-groups in a manner which minimized the degree of prior acquaintance among the members of each T-group and tended to balance the male-female ratio within each T-group.

Procedure

Both about five weeks before this lab and again about six months afterwards data packets containing 10 personality variables were

distributed by mail to all participants. At these times the participants were also requested to pass along nearly identical data packets to two other persons of their choice, one of whom was a personal intimate and the other of whom was a colleague. All respondents were advised that all information would be kept confidential. All data packets were posted directly to the researchers rather than being returned to the participants. Prelab data packets were received from 48 participants, 48 intimates and 46 colleagues. Postlab packets were completed and returned by 48 participants, 41 intimates, and 38 colleagues. T-group assignments were made without knowledge of these data.

The 10 personality variables in all data packets included: three simple rating scales labeled (1) Openness, (2) Data Seeking, and (3) Data Giving--each requesting the respondent to select a point along continua from 1 (minimum) through 5 (average) to 9 (maximum) that represented their perception of the participant; (4) similar ratings as to how OK (Berne, 1966, p. 270) the participant regarded himself and (5) other persons--for which the continua ranged from 1 (not OK) through 4 (neutral) to 7 (OK); three factorially independent variables, each based upon nine bipolar semantic differential scales from Harrison's (1965) Person Description Instrument X: (6) interpersonal warmth and acceptance, (7) power and effectiveness in work, and (8) activity and expressiveness; and the two principal factors from a true-false modification of the

Interpersonal Check List (ICL; LaForge, 1963) of 128 scored items:

(9) Dominance-Submissiveness, a marker variable of self acceptance-rejection, and (10) Love-Hate, a marker measure of other acceptance-rejection.

During the lab participants separately rated their two trainers on Days 2 and 7, about 24 hours after the lab's beginning and before its end. Used for these appraisals were Self-Disclosure ratings (Hurley, 1967) and Feedback-Seeking (Force, 1969) ratings. This Self-Disclosure scale has been shown (Hurley & Hurley, 1968) to correlate substantially with other non-self-reported measures of self-disclosure, but the Feedback-Seeking instrument was new. High scores on this latter measure were intended to reflect a commitment to soliciting feedback (positive and negative) and to use it constructively, while lower scores were intended to reflect either a lessened interest in, or an inability to tolerate, such messages.

About 18 hours before the lab's end the participants were also asked to separately appraise their two trainers for effectiveness. This instrument requested that each trainer be rated on each of the following items as very effective, quite effective, somewhat effective, or not effective as represented, respectively, by scores of 3, 2, 1, and 0.

- a. How much did this trainer act in ways which helped the T-group to be more effective?
- b. How effectively did this trainer help me to become more aware of my personal hangups and of ways in which I might change my behavior?
- c. How effectively did this trainer understand me as an individual?

Findings and Discussion¹

Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance

To explore the possibilities of reducing the data generated by the personality variables, product-moment correlations were separately determined among these 10 measures for the participants, the intimates, and the colleagues at both prelab and postlab. Differences among these 135 [45 correlations X 3 comparisons (participants vs. intimates, participants vs. colleagues, and colleagues vs. intimates)] paired correlations at prelab and 135 more at postlab reached statistical significance ($p < .05$) in only 14 instances versus the 13.5 instances to be expected by chance. Since the hypothesis of no differences among the sets of intercorrelations across these three respondent groups could not be rejected, these prelab and postlab data were separately pooled. Each pool yielded two identical clusters, Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance.

The Self-Acceptance cluster contained the variables of Openness, Data Seeking, Data Giving, How OK I am, Power and Effectiveness in Work, Activity and Expressiveness, and Dominance-Submissiveness. Each of these seven variables were positively intercorrelated at beyond the .05 level with all others except for prelab Power and

¹Conservative two-tailed tests were used throughout. Because there were only five T-groups, across-group relationships which attained the .10 level are regarded as significant because a more restrictive significance level would have produced tests of very low power.

Effectiveness, which fell below this level in two of all possible instances. The variables How OK I think others are, Interpersonal Warmth and Acceptance, and Love-Hate defined the Other-Acceptance cluster. These three variables intercorrelated positively and significantly at both prelab and postlab. Total scores on each cluster intercorrelated $-.06$ at prelab and $-.05$ at postlab. Over the seven month interval from prelab to postlab, the Self-Acceptance total scores correlated $.76$ ($p < .001$) and total Other-Acceptance scores correlated $.82$ ($p < .001$). The relevance, the independence, and the stability of the dimensions of acceptance-rejection of the self (Self-Acceptance) and of others (Other-Acceptance) seemed firmly established by these findings.

A total of 48 participants, 41 intimates, and 36 colleagues contributed matched prelab and postlab descriptions of the participants on this series of personality variables. The mean Self-Acceptance scores of these respondents at prelab, postlab, and postlab minus prelab (change), respectively, were: Participants = 102.71, 111.28, and 8.57; Intimates = 109.38, 112.87, and 3.49; and Colleagues = 118.34, 116.08, and -2.24 . For Other-Acceptance the respondents' mean prelab, postlab, and change scores, respectively, were: Participants = 45.40, 46.91, and 1.51; Intimates = 47.12, 45.09, and -2.03 ; Colleagues = 46.51, 48.18, and 1.67. In all instances the colleagues and intimates described the participants more favorably on both Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance than did the self-reports. Thus, the participants generally described themselves less favorably than their "others" described them.

To appraise the overall effects of participation and also of possible differential changes across T-groups, analyses of variance were applied to these data using prelab scores as the covariate. All omitted or missing data were replaced by the mean change score of the same respondent class separately by T-groups. The overall gains on both variables were statistically significant. The F values, with $df = 1$ and 44 , were: Self-Acceptance = 7.70 ($p < .01$) and Other-Acceptance = 19.94 ($p < .001$). Between T-groups, the F values, with $df = 4$ and 44 , were: Self-Acceptance = 3.90 ($p < .01$) and Other-Acceptance = 1.24 (NS). Although both overall increments were statistically significant, the 0.28 mean total Other-Acceptance gain was notably smaller than the mean total Self-Acceptance gain of 3.10 by a 1 to 11 ratio. Assuming that both dimensions are equally important to interpersonal relationships, it appears that increased attention to the acceptance of others would be beneficial to the participants in T-groups. It also seems clear that these T-groups varied importantly in their impact upon Self-Acceptance, while the lesser differentiation across T-groups in Other-Acceptance may be partially attributable to limitations of the measure.

Ratings of Trainer Effectiveness

An overall effectiveness score for each trainer was determined by adding the mean scores received from the participants in his T-group over items a, b, c. Product-moment correlations were determined between the overall score and the mean score of the ten trainers on each component item. All three items were found to be significantly linked to this total score: $r_a = .86$ ($p < .01$); $r_b = .92$ ($p < .01$);

and $r_c = .67$ ($p < .05$). By averaging these overall effectiveness scores for the pair of trainers leading each T-group, total effectiveness scores for the five T-groups were determined. These were next correlated with the mean total (participant + intimate + colleague) change score for each T-group, as assessed six months later, on the Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance dimensions. These product-moment correlations were: Effectiveness versus Self-Acceptance = $.98$ ($p < .01$) and Effectiveness versus Other-Acceptance = $.74$ ($p < .10$). Thus, the within-lab trainer effectiveness rating predicted up to 96% of the six month postlab gains of these T-group according to the pooled reports of the participants, their intimates, and their colleagues.

This strong linkage between trainer effectiveness and participant gains, both assessed by T-group units, does not seem attributable to any procedural artifact. First, the use of change, rather than of direct, scores on Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance minimized the possible influence of "response set" variables, such as acquiescence, a preference for extreme responses, generosity, etc. Secondly, only the participants made the ratings of trainer effectiveness, while both the intimates and colleagues also contributed to the change scores.

While the present study focused upon positive changes, rather than upon casualties like the Yalom and Lieberman (1971) investigation, both studies indicate that the style of the group leader is a very powerful influence. They suggest that older studies which depicted

the group psychotherapist is playing a lesser role in outcome, such as the findings of Berzon, Plous, and Farson (1963), may be restricted to a more inert leadership style. It is also true that evidence of the differential effects of leaders is less likely to be observed with more inadequate measures of outcome.

Trainer Self-Disclosure and Feedback-Seeking

These two eight anchoring-point rating scales were administered about 24 hours after the lab opened (Day 2) and again near its end (Day 7). Although each trainer was separately rated by the members of his T-group, the ratings of each trainer pair were averaged to represent the T-group unit. The product-moment correlations between the six month postlab total change scores and these Day 2 trainer ratings were: Self-Disclosure versus Self-Acceptance = .86 ($p < .07$), Self-Disclosure versus Other-Acceptance = .72, Feedback-Seeking versus Self-Acceptance = .87 ($p < .06$), and Feedback-Seeking versus Other-Acceptance = .85 ($p < .08$). For Day 7 these r 's were: Self-Disclosure versus Self-Acceptance = .83 ($p < .09$), Self-Disclosure versus Other-Acceptance = .57, Feedback-Seeking versus Other-Acceptance = .86 ($p < .07$). Beyond identifying self-disclosure and feedback-seeking as highly important trainer behaviors, these large correlations between the postlab outcome measures and these trainer ratings as early as Day 2 of the lab suggest that the differences between more and less effective trainer behaviors became apparent to the participants quite early in their lab experience.

In this perspective it was to be anticipated that these within-lab ratings of trainer behavior would correlate substantially with the overall effectiveness ratings of the trainer pairs on Day 7. These correlations, by T-group units, were: Day 2 Self-Disclosure = .87 ($p < .06$); Day 7 Self-Disclosure = .84 ($p < .08$); Day 2 Feedback-Seeking = .85 ($p < .08$); and Day 7 Feedback-Seeking = .97 ($p < .01$).

These findings indicate that the participants' gains from prelab to postlab were highly related to their within-lab perceptions of the trainers on overall effectiveness, Self-Disclosure, and Feedback-Seeking. The present theoretical orientation suggests that these relationships may be surface outcroppings of the hidden operation of variables such as trainer's Self-Acceptance, Other-Acceptance, or even their cross-product term, which Hurley and Force (1971) labeled interpersonal competence. There are many alternative possibilities. No resolution of this problem is permitted by the limitations of the present data, although these results strongly suggest the importance of studying the personality and behaviors of the T-group trainer and group psychotherapist at least as thoroughly as such attributes of the group members. It seems worth noting, however, that Culbert (1968) and Pino and Cohen (1971), using very dissimilar but quite rigorous methodologies, independently found that trainer self-disclosure was importantly related to the gains of T-group members.

Differences Among T-Groups

For the five T-groups the mean total change scores, with each entry representing 10 each of participants, intimates, and colleagues, in Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance, respectively, were: A) -0.22, -1.92; B) 7.39, 2.90; C) 3.81, -1.10; D) -1.65, -0.86; and E) 6.18, 2.38. These data show net losses on both measures for T-groups A and D but net positive changes for T-groups B, C, and E.² Major gains occurred only within T-groups B and E, both of which had senior trainers who were Diplomates in clinical psychology (American Board of Professional Psychology)--the only two on the staff of this lab. Both Diplomates were rated more highly on overall effectiveness by the members of their T-groups than were any other trainers. In seven of eight (2 occasions X 2 trainers X 2 measures) possible instances, these Diplomates were rated higher than all other trainers on Self-Disclosure and Feedback-Seeking. Both Diplomates also had considerably greater amounts of experience as group psychotherapists and in the general mental health sector than any other staff members.

²These change scores were much more conservative than data from the same respondents assembled from written descriptions of change or from direct ratings of change collected at six months postlab. Thus, the proportions of positive to total (positive + neutral + negative) changes by these methods were: personality data = 52%, written descriptions = 78%, and direct ratings = 91%.

A Deficiency in the Acceptance of Others?

Like many other personality theorists and psychotherapists, Gibb (1964) depicted acceptance of the self as a necessary antecedent of the acceptance of others. A contrary position seems clear in H. S. Sullivan's (1953, p. 17) support of G. H. Mead's view that the self evolves largely from the "reflected appraisals of others." It is difficult to imagine how the self-image can be constructed except through the progressively more selective assimilation of and reaction to other's feelings and behaviors toward the individual. While it seems important to determine which of these processes comes first from the standpoint of theory, the present empirical evidence, like much other research data, strongly indicates that little if any general correlation exists among the adults in our society between the acceptance of self and the acceptance of others.

Sometimes an apparent contradiction in lab-related changes on Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance was clear in the descriptions of change collected at six months postlab. One participant wrote, "I am happy with the fact that I can now show anger more readily . . . (but) being more assertive with my wife has brought on some interpersonal problems." Another participant's wife wrote, "less rational in dealing with problems at home. . . Sometimes 'lashes out' at family. This rarely happened before the lab." Although her response was the most negative written report received, at the same time her husband wrote, "I feel a great deal more open and confident since

the lab. . . . I am more honest. . . . and more content with myself." These excerpts suggest that Self-Acceptance gains do not necessarily produce an increased acceptance of others. The fact that the general Other-Acceptance gain of all T-group participants averaged less than 1/11 (0.28 over 3.10) of the Self-Acceptance gain suggests the advisability of placing a higher priority upon T-group activities which will enhance the participants' sensitivity to the needs of others. Surely competence in interpersonal relationships cannot be enhanced for all persons by only increasing one's acceptance of the self. Given our traditional cultural emphasis upon self-sufficiency, at least as many individuals must have deficiencies in their acceptance of others. The present evidence indicates, however, that T-groups may often be insensitive to this issue.

Summary

Both six months after and five weeks before participation in an intensive eight-day T-group experience, the participants were described by themselves, one intimate, and one colleague on a variety of personality measures which reduced--as anticipated from theory--to independent measures of Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance. Covariance analyses of perceived changes (postlab score minus prelab score) revealed significant gains on both dimensions as well as significant variations in Self-Acceptance gains by T-groups. Within-lab ratings of trainers by T-group members on effectiveness, Self-Disclosure, and Feedback-Seeking generally correlated positively and significantly

with changes in both Self-Acceptance and Other-Acceptance by T-group units. Senior trainers who were Diplomates in clinical psychology were notably most effective. The need for a greater emphasis upon the acceptance of others was indicated by the much smaller (1/11) overall gain in Other-Acceptance than in Self-Acceptance.

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